

STRATEGIES

Tips to Make Your Traveling Easier



Can You **Take It** with You?

Carry-on questions and customs conundrums

BY JIM GLAB

Airline folklore is rife with tales of unlikely things that passengers have tried to bring into the cabin as carry-on luggage. Would you believe a large wedding cake? The drive shaft from a BMW? How about a corpse in a duffel bag?

Airlines, of course, have rules about the number and kinds of things you can carry on. Many are getting tougher as flight departures are delayed by late arrivals who insist on searching every overhead bin for a place to stash their over-size bags, and planes go out fuller than ever. Most airlines now have "sizer boxes" at the gate, which serve as a reminder to check bags that don't fit. British Airways recently started enforcing a rule of one carry-on per passenger in

coach. At Delta, "we've really gotten serious about our carry-on policy," an official says.

On major domestic airlines, your ticket usually entitles you to take along three pieces of luggage at no extra charge, no more than two of which may be carried on board—provided they fit in the overhead bin or under your seat. But passenger confusion about the rules is compounded by two factors: First, regulations (or their enforcement) can be inconsistent. Airlines occasionally relax the carry-on allowance to three pieces—or tighten it to just one—depending on how full the flight is.

Second, individual airlines have varying policies about

